

Micro-Practices for Busy Days

60-Second Resets:

- Take three deep breaths between clients
- Roll your shoulders and stretch
- Say “I am setting aside the previous conversation and preparing to be present for the next person.”

Physical Transitions:

- Keep essential oil at your desk for a sensory reset
- Change your sitting position between clients
- Splash cold water on your wrists or face
- Step outside for 30 seconds of fresh air

Documentation as Closure:

- Reframe documentation as a detachment ritual
- Mentally “package” their story into the case file
- End notes with a brief reflection on what went well
- Consciously “close the file” mentally as you finish

Digital Boundaries:

- Use different browser windows for different clients
- Close all case files before starting with your next client
- Set messaging status to “busy” during meetings

Build Rituals Between Work and Home

- **End-of-Day Rituals:** Create a consistent end-of-day ritual that signals “work is now done.”
- **Physical Boundaries:** Create visual barriers between work and home, and use physical cues like changing clothes or taking off your ID badge.
- **Mental Check-Out Process:** write down unresolved issues or tasks, note one positive accomplishment, and say “I’ve done what I can for today.”

Physical Practices for Emotional Balance

Movement Micro-Breaks:

- Stretch for 60 seconds between meetings
- Take stairs instead of elevators when possible
- Stand and shake out your hands after difficult calls

Breath as an Anchor

- Practice “box breathing” when feeling overwhelmed
- Take three conscious breaths every hour
- Take three deep breaths before entering your home

Nature Connection

- Keep a small plant on your desk
- Position yourself near windows when possible
- Notice nature when traveling between places
- Walk in areas with trees when possible

Be a Mirror, Not a Sponge

Practice conscious empathy:

- Mentally say: “I am witnessing their experience, not taking it on”
- Visualize their emotions as something you see, not absorb

Create support structures:

- Establish a “check-in buddy” with a trusted colleague
- Schedule brief 5-minute debriefs
- Use supervision time to address boundaries

Your ability to be present for others depends on creating space for yourself.

Psychological detachment isn’t a luxury—it’s essential for sustainability in community social services.